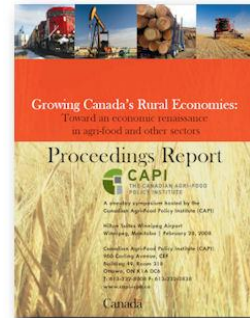


CAPI releases rural renaissance report

OTTAWA, February 3, 2009 — The federal and provincial governments must do more to support the economic diversification underway in Canada's rural areas, says a new report by the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI).

In 2008, CAPI undertook a project to encourage a renaissance in rural economies in Canada, both in the agri-food sector and other areas. The project was called Growing Canada's Rural Economies. The cornerstone of this project was a one-day symposium that CAPI hosted in Winnipeg. The objective was to consult with experts who could help the Institute identify what is currently known on this issue, and highlight topics that should be addressed to stimulate a rural renaissance.



Several major themes emerged from the symposium:

- **Diversification:** As agriculture plays a less significant role in rural economies, local communities must diversify;
- **Community support:** Government support needs to shift from a sector-based approach that favors traditional agriculture to one based on the unique geography of each region;
- **Infrastructure:** For value-added activities to occur, rural communities need the appropriate infrastructure, particularly in transportation and broadband Internet;
- **Entrepreneurship:** Must be encouraged. This means relaxing regulations for small businesses, and empowering people to become leaders;
- **Research:** Needed in many areas. Should the "cluster" approach to economic development be encouraged? Why do some rural areas prosper and grow while others fail?
- **Environment:** Rural communities must consider environmental impacts, and develop sustainable technologies and living patterns. Sustainability is an economic opportunity. For example, in rural Quebec, wind power presents a great opportunity.